MEDIA RELEASE
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Western Australia Should Stay the Course on Training Reform: ACPET

Reforming the West Australian training sector will benefit students, communities and businesses across the State and drive growth in new student enrolments, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) said today.

Acknowledging that the reform process would be long and difficult, ACPET’s West Australian Chair, Maria Fiocco, said it was crucial that the WA Government continue its course of action and not be distracted by the challenges ahead, and she cited the success of training reforms in other States as proof that WA is on the right track.

“Reforms to the training systems in Victoria and South Australia have not been easy, but overall the evidence is clear that when government offers people a choice of training provider more people take up the opportunity to train.”

“In Victoria, training enrolments in skills shortage industries like health, social assistance and construction have all increased, as have enrolments by indigenous students, students with disabilities and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds,” Dr Fiocco said.

“Those are the outcomes we should be fighting for in WA. Opening up the market to provide greater choice and diversity is the proven way to achieve them.”

Dr Fiocco urged the WA Government to see through the campaigning by some commentators suggesting that a competitive training sector would spell the end of TAFE.

“There will always be a role for TAFE in our training sector, but the days of TAFE being the only choice are long gone. TAFE is a good choice for many students, but it is not the only choice or indeed the best choice for all learners,” she said.

“There is growing demand for alternatives. Independent training providers deliver an enormous range of wrap around training and employment support, offering specially designed courses for particular groups of students (including migrants and refugees), in partnership with industry, and which meet the unique needs of students in ways that large government organisations find more difficult.”

“The sooner we acknowledge that balance, the sooner we can get on with the job of delivering a training sector that provides what students and employers want.”

“The critical reforms that are now being introduced to the multibillion dollar training sector will provide the platform to meet future global challenges. Reform is never easy, but for our training system it is necessary,” Dr Fiocco said.

ACPET is available for comment
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